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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - MUSLIM WORLD: ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS - KORAN DESECRATION - AFGHANISTAN - LAURA BUSH TO MIDDLE EAST EUROPEAN ISSUES - REFERENDUM - NATO AND DARFUR PARIS - MONDAY, MAY 23, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

[¶1. MUSLIM WORLD: ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS - KORAN DESECRATION - AFGHANISTAN - LAURA BUSH TO MIDDLE EAST](#)

[¶2. EUROPEAN ISSUES - REFERENDUM - NATO AND DARFUR](#)

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

WHILE EUROPEAN ISSUES DOMINATE FRONT PAGES, EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES AS THE MAY 29 VOTE ON THE EU REFERENDUM NEARS, REPORTS AND COMMENTS ON ANTI-AMERICAN PROTEST ABOUND, LINKED TO THE NEWSWEEK ARTICLE BUT ALSO TO THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORT ON INCIDENTS IN BAGRAM. ARTICLES ABOUT PRESIDENT KARZAI'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON WEIGH HIS NEED TO "WALK A FINE LINE" BETWEEN DOMESTIC POLITICS AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH "HIS AMERICAN ALLIES." (SEE PART C) THE POPPY INDUSTRY IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE DIFFICULTY IN REDUCING THE COUNTRY'S OUTPUT IS THE BASIS FOR A MAJOR ARTICLE IN LE JOURNAL DU DIMANCHE TITLED: "THE OPIUM WAR HAS BEGUN." CORRESPONDENT ERIC DE LAVARENE WRITES: "WHILE THE AFGHAN AUTHORITIES ARE BENT ON PUTTING AN END TO DRUG TRAFFICKING, THE TASK IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE FARMERS DEPEND ON THE OPIUM INDUSTRY FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD AND THOSE FIGHTING THE ANTI-DRUG WAR ARE ALSO ACCOMPLICES OF THE DRUG TRAFFICKERS." A DOUBLE PAGE PHOTOGRAPH IN WEEKLY L'EXPRESS SHOWS A "HAPPY AFGHAN" AMIDST HIS POPPY FIELDS.

TWO POLLS ON THE FRENCH EU REFERENDUM SHOW THE 'NO' STILL IN THE LEAD WITH 52 PERCENT (IFOP- JOURNAL DU DIMANCHE AND LOUIS-HARRIS/ LIBERATION). WASHINGTON'S ATTITUDE TO THE REFERENDUM IS THE BASIS FOR A REPORT IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO. (SEE PART C) A SEPARATE ARTICLE ON DARFUR REITERATES THE CONTROVERSIAL APPROACH TO NATO'S INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA, WHETHER SEEN FROM BRUSSELS OR FROM WASHINGTON. (SEE PART C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

MUSLIM WORLD: ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS - KORAN DESECRATION - AFGHANISTAN - LAURA BUSH TO MIDDLE EAST

"CONTROVERSY OVER U.S. BEHAVIOR IN AFGHANISTAN GROWS" MARIE-FRANCE CALLE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/23): "THE REPORT IS DAMNING FOR THE U.S. . WHILE PRESIDENT KARZAI WAS PUTTING THE LAST TOUCHES TO HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON. THE REPORT COULD HAVE DARKENED WHAT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN A CLOUDLESS VISIT. BUT THERE WILL BE NO DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT. KARZAI REALLY HAS VERY LITTLE CHOICE. HE IS THE ENDURING AMERICAN ALLY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE OWES THE AMERICANS: IN SHORT HE OWES THEM EVERYTHING. HE ALSO KNOWS THAT WITHOUT THE AMERICANS, AFGHANISTAN WOULD QUICKLY GO BACK TO CHAOS. WITH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER, CHAOS WOULD BE THE WORST POSSIBLE SCENARIO. AND WITH VIOLENCE ERUPTING ONCE AGAIN IN AFGHANISTAN, PRESIDENT KARZAI WILL HAVE TO WALK A FINE LINE."

"THE AFGHAN GREAT GAME" JACQUES HUBERT-RODIER IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS (05/23): "IS NEWSWEEK'S RETRACTION ENOUGH? THE CONTROVERSY, WHICH ITS ARTICLE TRIGGERED, IS FAR FROM HAVING BEEN QUELLED. IN AFGHANISTAN AND IN THE MUSLIM WORLD IN GENERAL, THE INCIDENT HAS RE-IGNITED ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENTS WHICH ARE BEING EXPLOITED BY EXTREMISTS. IN KABUL, DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF INTERNATIONAL TROOPS, THE SITUATION REMAINS VOLATILE. WARLORDS REMAIN AT THE CENTER OF AFGHANISTAN'S SECURITY CONCERNs. MEANWHILE OPIUM PRODUCTION PROSPERS. YET THERE ARE AREAS WHERE THINGS HAVE IMPROVED. BUT ONLY A FRACTION OF THE POPULATION CAN ENJOY THESE IMPROVEMENTS, AND THE SLIGHTEST SPARK, LIKE THE NEWSWEEK ARTICLE, IS ENOUGH TO SET THINGS AFIRE. TODAY'S QUICK SPREAD OF INFORMATION, WHETHER PROVEN OR NOT, TRIGGERS DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD, WHERE MANY OF THE FAITHFUL HAVE THE FEELING THAT THEIR RELIGION HAS BECOME THE TARGET OF WESTERN ATTACKS. AFGHANISTAN, WHICH HAS GIVEN SANCTUARY TO BIN LADEN UNDER THE TALIBAN, IS AT THE HEART OF THE REGION'S POWER GAME."

"THE U.S. ANGERS MUSLIM WORLD" THIERRY DE ROCHECHOUART IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR

(05/23): "DESECRATED KORAN, PHOTOS OF SADDAM, AND TORTURE IN AFGHANISTAN: EVERY TIME, STORIES REVEALED BY THE WESTERN PRESS IGNITE THE MUSLIM WORLD. AND THE MOVEMENT KEEPS GROWING. ON FRIDAY, THE GREAT IMAM OF MECCA DEMANDED THAT WASHINGTON APOLOGIZE FOR THE ALLEGED DESECRATION OF THE KORAN. BUT THE WHITE HOUSE APPEARS TO BE HELPLESS IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO DOUSE THE FIRES. THE FIRST LADY'S TRIP WAS SUPPOSED TO BE PART OF THE WHITE HOUSE CHARM OFFENSIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

UNFORTUNATELY SHE WAS HECKLED IN JERUSALEM. FURTHER PROOF THAT WASHINGTON HAS BEEN CAUGHT IN A WIND OF PANIC IS THE FACT THAT IT HAS CALLED FOR AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION FURTHER TO THE PUBLICATION OF SADDAM'S PHOTOGRAPHS. NUMEROUS ARAB PAPERS ON SATURDAY WONDERED ABOUT THE AMERICAN MILITARY TROOPS' DESIRE TO 'HUMILIATE' ARAB SOCIETY IN GENERAL."

"LAURA BUSH HECKLED IN JERUSALEM"

PHILIPPE GELIE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/23): "LAURA BUSH TOOK HER FIRST STEPS AS A DIPLOMAT IN A MINEFIELD. AS SHE VISITED JERUSALEM, SHE WAS SUCCESSIVELY HECKLED BY JEWISH DEMONSTRATORS AT THE WAILING WALL AND LATER BY MUSLIMS AT THE DOME MOSQUE. HER WELCOME GIVES THE MEASURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE WHITE HOUSE IS FACING IN THE MIDDLE EAST. LAURA BUSH CAN NO LONGER IGNORE THE TENSION IN THIS REGION AND THE LEVEL OF RESENTMENT WHICH AMERICA TRIGGERS HERE. THIS TRIP, HER SECOND OF THIS NATURE, IS CLEARLY POLITICAL. THE GOAL IS TO IMPROVE HER COUNTRY'S IMAGE AND TO ENCOURAGE REFORMS IN HOST COUNTRIES. WHILE THE IDEAS SHE IS PROMOTING HAVE BEEN HERS FOR A LONG TIME, THE FACT THAT SHE IS EXPRESSING THEM ON THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA IS SOMETHING NEW. LAURA BUSH HAS ADOPTED THE PRESIDENT'S CAUSE TO DEMOCRATIZE THE MIDDLE EAST AND IS FAST BECOMING HIS NUMBER ONE EMISSARY."

EUROPEAN ISSUES - REFERENDUM - NATO AND DARFUR

"THE EU CONSTITUTION: WASHINGTON'S INTEREST AND MISTRUST"

PHILIPPE GELIE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/23): "SEEN FROM THE U.S., EUROPE IS AN ILL-DEFINED ENTITY. WHICH IS NOT OVERLY PROFILED IN THE U.S. MEDIA. WHILE SECRETARY RICE HAS REITERATED WASHINGTON'S SUPPORT FOR EUROPE'S CONSTRUCTION, THE TERMS USED ARE OFTEN VAGUE, POSSIBLY BY DESIGN. WASHINGTON IS ESSENTIALLY WONDERING WHERE THE EUROPEAN ADVENTURE WILL LEAD. THE ATTITUDE OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS DETERMINED BY TWO MAJOR QUESTIONS: CAN THE EUROPEAN PROJECT CHALLENGE AMERICA'S POWER AND CAN IT HARM NATO. IN A CAPITAL WHERE OPPOSITION TO MULTIPOLARITY DOMINATES, EUROPE'S JOINT FOREIGN POLICY IS PERCEIVED AS BEING 'HOSTILE TO AMERICA'S VISION OF THE WORLD,' AND EUROPE'S DEFENSE INITIATIVE AS A WAR MACHINE AGAINST THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. FRANCE IN PARTICULAR IS ACCUSED OF NURTURING PLANS FOR A 'EUROPE POWER' MEANT TO RIVAL THE U.S. RATHER THAN BE ITS PARTNER."

"EUROPE, NATO AND DARFUR"

ALEXANDRINE BOUILHET IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/23): "WHILE NATO IS ABOUT TO SET FOOT IN AFRICA FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY, THE EU IS REFINING ITS STRATEGY. THE EU, WHICH HAS BEEN PRESENT IN DARFUR FOR THE PAST SIX MONTHS, DOES NOT WANT TO SEE NATO, THE NEWCOMER, STEAL ITS THUNDER. EUROPE'S ALL-OUT EFFORTS TO HELP DARFUR COMES DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL WHICH PLANS TO GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT TO THE FIRST NATO SUPPORT MISSION IN AFRICA. URGED BY WASHINGTON, THIS INTERVENTION, EVEN IF IT IS A DISCREET ONE, IS CLEARLY A DIPLOMATIC VICTORY FOR SECRETARY RICE. FRANCE FINALLY GAVE ITS OWN GREEN LIGHT, EAGER AS IT IS NOT TO MAKE DARFUR A NEW CAUSE OF CONFLICT WITH WASHINGTON. BUT THE SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE A MAJOR HEADACHE: THE BATTLE WITH THE EU WILL MAINLY BE FOUGHT BETWEEN THE AMERICANS AND THE FRENCH OVER AIR SURVEILLANCE. THIS NEW EAGERNESS BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP DARFUR REVEALS THE RIVALRY BETWEEN MAJOR POWERS WHICH ALL WANT TO REVAMP THEIR IMAGE AFTER THE RWANDA GENOCIDE AS MUCH AS THEY WANT TO SECURE THEIR OWN PROFITS FROM SUDAN'S OIL RESERVES." WOLFF